**Upliftment of SC Population in Assam**

2559. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the steps being taken by her Ministry for the upliftment of Scheduled Castes population; and

(b) the amount sanctioned for the benefit of Scheduled Caste population in Assam, along with the number of beneficiaries during the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is the nodal Ministry that oversees the interests of the Scheduled Castes. Besides implementing several welfare and protective schemes on its own, this Ministry also closely monitors the action taken by other Ministries for protection and promotion of the interests of SCs. As a special measure, under the Post Matric Scholarship scheme, committed liability was dispensed with for the North Eastern States from the year 1997-98.

(b) Details are in the Annexure. *[See* Appendix-189, Annexure No. 65]

**Export of Steel Plates by SAIL**

2560. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the MINISTER OF STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Steel Authority of India is exploring new international markets like Taiwan and Mexico for exports of steel plates;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the export of steel plates by SAIL in the last five years, year-wise; and

(d) the details of the target set by SAIL for the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY); (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During 1999-2000, SAIL has exported 53.3 thousand tonnes and 26.2 thousand tonnes of Plates to Taiwan and Mexico respectively.

(c) Year-wise export of steel plates by SAIL to different countries during the last 5 years is as follows :

('000 tonnes)

| Year | Quantity |
|---|---|
| 1995-96 | 161.7 |
| 1996-97 | 299.0 |
| 1997-98 | 359.6 |
| 1998-99 | 285.9 |
| 1999-2000 | 325.8 (Prov.) |

(d) The target for export of mild steel plates during 2000-2001 is 1,25,000 MT.

**Profits of SAIL**

2561. SHRI SANTOSH BARGRODIA: Will the MINISTER OF STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the profits of SAIL have scaled down over the years;

(b) whether the company needs to focus on its core activities to remain competitive in the market; and

(c) if so, what precautions could be taken for non-occurence of such activities in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILI? RAY): (a) and (b) Yes Sir,

(c) Government has approved a package for the financial and business restructuring of SAIL which *inter-alia* includes :